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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
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INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001448

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#)
SUBJECT: ABU MAZEN SECURITY ADVISOR ON NEXT STEPS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1410
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1413 (EXDIS/NOTAL)

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4
(b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In an April 6 conversation with Pol Chief, Sahim Fateh (Abu Hisham), a close advisor on security affairs to PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) indicated that Abu Mazen is unlikely to take operational control over the National Security Forces (NSF), and reiterated a long-standing position held by senior Fatah leaders that any dilution of Hamas' responsibility for the overall security situation would let the movement off the hook. Abu Hisham highlighted security appointments, including that of Rashid Abu Shubak as internal security chief within the Ministry of the Interior, downplayed the role of a National Security Advisor and instead advocated the creation of a "Secretary-General" who would oversee a Secretariat looking after all significant security policy matters. On the Border Crossings Authority, he said that an internal debate continued over which crossings the Authority should be responsible for; he said he expected the decree about the Authority to be signed and issued in the coming days. He named several PA military officers who would be designated to liaise with the U.S. Security Coordination (USSC) mission. Abu Hisham was dismissive about Hamas' ability to govern, predicted a crisis within the next several months, and pressed for continuing U.S. financial and political assistance to Abu Mazen.

NSF: Under Hamas Control

[1](#)2. (C) Abu Hisham was definitive about Security Force (PASF) reporting relationships, and particularly the role of the NSF: the forces are under the operational control of the Interior Minister (ref (a)). As rationales, Abu Hisham cited the Roadmap's goal of consolidation of services under an empowered Interior Minister, but placed most of his emphasis on the need for Hamas to take the blame for the security situation in PA areas in the likely event of failure.

Rashid Abu Shubak Interior Appointment

[1](#)3. (C) Abu Hisham confirmed that Gaza Preventive Security Organization (PSO) Chief Rashid Abu Shubak had been elevated to a post variously described as chief of internal

security/director general of the internal security apparatus.

He described Abu Shubak's appointment as the interposition of a senior Fatah figure into the MOI chain of command; under the decree, Abu Shubak would oversee the civil police, PSO, and civil defense, and report to the Interior Minister.

(Note: Abu Shubak's appointment has been attacked internally by Civil Police Chief Ala Husni, who complained in a note to Abu Mazen that Abu Shubak's date of rank as brigadier makes him junior to him and other chiefs. Separately, Hamas PM Hanniyyah took issue with the appointment in the press; Abu Mazen and Hanniyyah are due to discuss the issue late on April 7 in Gaza. End note.)

Border Crossing Authority

14. (C) Announcements have received wide press play that Abu Mazen has appointed Brigadier Nazmi Abd-al Qadir Muhanna as head of the border crossing authority, reporting to the President. Abu Hisham revealed that there is, as yet, no new decree confirming this appointment, pending further intra-PA discussions about which crossings the Authority should cover as well as concerns raised by Hamas about the process of the appointment. The selection process will also be covered in the April 7 Hanniyyah-Abu Mazen discussion; Abu Hisham said that Abu Mazen would inform Hanniyyah that the arrangement was legal and predicted that Abu Mazen would prevail.

National Security Advisor?

15. (C) Abu Hisham had not heard of Tayyib Abdel Rahim's candidacy as a possible National Security Advisor (note: nor had other senior Fatah or Presidential Office officials. End note) Abu Hisham said he had proposed to Abu Mazen that - instead of a National Security Advisor - the PA might be better served by a "Secretary General," running a Secretariat "on the Russian model." The Secretariat would oversee all significant policy issues and operate from the Office of the President. Abu Hisham said the idea would "institutionalize" Presidential involvement in these issues and ensure follow-up. He noted that Abu Mazen had approved the concept "in principle;" however, it is unclear that this means in practice. When asked for SYG candidates, Abu Hisham had no names, but offered that he was currently performing this function.

USSC Point of Contact

16. (C) Abu Hisham said Brigadier Younis al-As and Colonel Hazam Atallah had been selected to serve as POCs for LTG Dayton and his team. The PA officers were briefed this week; Abu Mazen intends to formally notify LTG Dayton next week. Asked for his views on future directions for the USSC mission, Abu Hisham demurred and said that it would be up to the Palestinian officers working alongside the USSC to consider those points.

Future Support for Abu Mazen

17. (C) Abu Hisham predicted that Hamas would not be able to govern and thought that would become evident in the next two to three months. He said it was essential for the U.S. to ramp up its support for Abu Mazen. He cited the need for financial and political support and asked for U.S. assistance in expanding the Presidential Guard from 1,000 to 3,000 members: "well-trained and equipped, such a force would be more than a match for 100,000 regular PASF forces."